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**Professionalization of early childhood educators with a focus on natural learning situations and individual development of mathematical competencies: results from an evaluation study.**

Kortenkamp, Ulrich (ed.) et al., Early mathematics learning. Selected papers of the POEM 2012 conference, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, February 27–29, 2012. New York, NY: Springer (ISBN 978-1-4614-4677-4/hbk; 978-1-4614-4678-1/ebook). 275-290 (2014).

Summary: Today, there are many materials and learning programs for early childhood mathematics education. They differ considerably: Some have a strong instructive perspective on learning, whereas some focus on co-constructive elements. Providing children with sound basic mathematical prerequisites presents early childhood educators with considerable challenges – especially in the context of natural learning situations, where no prescribed procedure gives them the sense of security that they act in an adequate way. To support the educators in this important task and to encourage them to focus on a constructive perspective of learning with instructive elements only in case of individual support, a professional development program was designed and evaluated. Statistical analyses indicate that children whose educators were able to support children in their individual development due to a substantial knowledge of early mathematical development, and of ways of engaging young children in mathematics, improved their mathematical abilities compared to children belonging to a control group.

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